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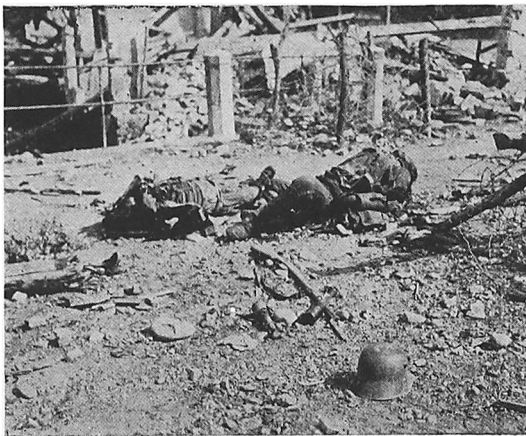
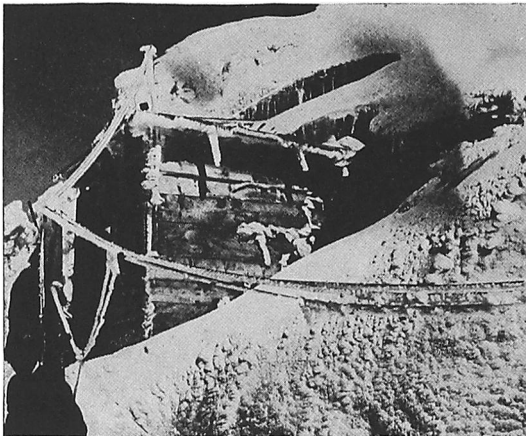
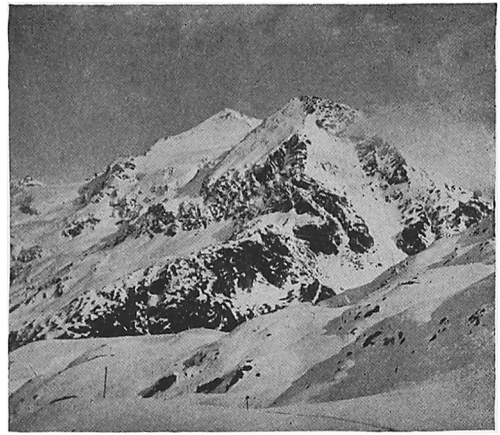
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*Königspitz—The highest point of the battle line in all Europe—15,000 feet. Trenches on top of this mountain, cut out of ice, and two hundred feet apart, were the scene of much fighting*

*Italian Military Post on top of Mount Tesero, 13,000 feet*

*Austrian dead lying in the streets at San Donadi Piavi*

*Mountain Scene taken from the great Zebbru Glacier*

*A scene in Padua after an aerial raid*

*General appearance of Austrian trenches immediately after being captured, everything topsy-turvy and the ground strewn with dead, military equipment, clothing, letters and personal effects of the soldiers*

# On the Italian-Austrian Front

By LIEUT. LYMAN W. ROGERS

Editor's Note.—Lieut. Lyman W. Rogers, the author, was attached to the Italian Army doing Posto di Ristoro work. The Italian officers called the American Red Cross post in the mountains "Posto di Ristoro General Pershing." On the day that Lieut. Rogers opened the Post the Americans in France defeated the Germans at St. Mihiel and the Italians were wildly enthusiastic over the American success. Lieut. Rogers was on the Piave River when the Austrians met their great defeat. He was there four months and in the Alps two months. He won the Italian War Cross for climbing the highest mountain in the Alps, Konigspitz, and delivering American Red Cross supplies to the soldiers on top of this mountain. His story, written from personal observation, is most interesting. The illustrations furnished were taken direct by special photographers and are authentic in detail.

WHILE going over a section of the Piave battle front, I came across a great many Austrian helmets, scattered over the ground among the dead Austrian soldiers. The sight of these helmets recalled the promise I made to friends when I left America, that I would bring back a helmet, so I picked up one which was lying beside a dead Austrian soldier who had been shot through the neck.

A few pointers about the Austrians may

be of interest to your readers. The Austrians treated the Italian prisoners very cruelly. The diet of the Italian soldier who was a prisoner in Austria consisted of soup made out of grass and turnips. The Austrian officials tell me that about 100,000 Italian soldiers died from starvation in Austria during the past year.

I crossed over the Piave with the Italian shock troops at San Donaldi Piave, where I saw four Austrian soldiers tied to a tree,



*Arditi (Italian storm troops) repelling an Austrian attack*



THIS PICTURE OF SOME REGIMENT OF AUSTRIAN OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS WAS MADE FROM A PLATE THAT WAS FOUND WITH MANY OTHERS AT CEGGIA, ITALY  
AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS CAPTURED BY ITALIANS WHO FOUND THEM RAGGED, DIRTY AND HUNGRY  
AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS WHO DESERTED TO THE ALPINI SOLDIERS AT SAN CATERINA BECAUSE OF HUNGER

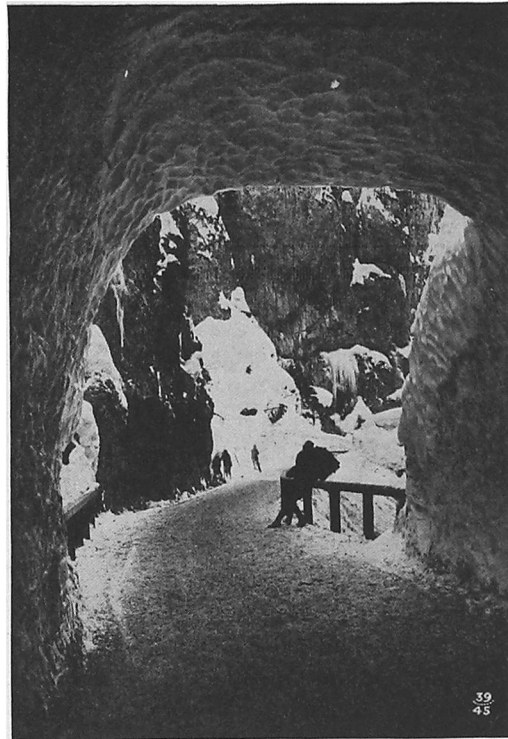
with their machine gun. The object of shackling these men to a tree was to keep them from running away. They had orders to hold up the Italian advance with this machine gun, in order that their comrades might escape. They never fired a shot, but showed the greatest pleasure in being taken prisoners.

I was on the Italian-Swiss-Austrian frontier and I saw a great many of the Italian prisoners returning from Austria to Italy via Switzerland. These men weighed on the average of anywhere from 70 to 80 lbs. They all had tuberculosis, heart trouble and complications caused by lack of nourishment. None of them could walk but all had to be carried on stretchers.

After the Austrian defeat in July, 1918, the Austrian government had their soldiers outrage the Italian women in the Italian territory that they occupied, for the purpose of communicating to these women social diseases. These women were then sent to Switzerland by the hundreds and from Switzerland they were sent to Italy. The object of this devilment was to spread social diseases among the Italian troops if possible, and also to spread terrorism among the Italian women.

Speaking of terrorism makes me think of another thing that the Austrians have been doing in Italy. After their defeat, realizing that they could not beat the Italians with their cannon, the Austrian aviators dropped candy containing cholera bacilli over Padua and other Italian cities. Their scheme was that the Italian child in the streets would pick up this candy and eat it, and thereupon be stricken with cholera and that the cholera would spread in the homes and thereby cause a great plague in Italy. Happily their scheme fell through.

It might be of interest to you also, to know that one of the contributing causes of the great Italian defeat at Carporetto,



*Ice Tunnel cut by the Italians. Immense rooms are cut in these tunnels which serve to house their soldiers*

October 24, 1917, was, that just before the Austrians made their attack, many Italian soldiers in the sector against which the Austrians launched their attack, received anonymous letters supposedly from friends at home, telling them that their wives were receiving the attention of other men. This greatly depressed the soldiers, as up to this time furloughs in the Italian army were practically unknown, and the soldiers had many hardships. The "credit" for this little piece of propaganda work should be given to German spies in Italy.

The Austrian soldiers advanced into Italy up to the Piave, where they were stopped by the Italian troops. They occupied this territory a little over a year. The offensive that was launched by the Italians, to drive them out of Italy, was made on the first anniversary of the Italian defeat at Carpo-



*Military Barracks in the Alps where the temperature reaches sixty degrees below zero in the winter season*

retto—that is on October 24, 1918. During the year that they were in Italian territory they robbed all the Italian men, women and children of their clothing leaving them with hardly bare necessities, even taking their bedding, overcoats, vests, shoes, and sending all of this clothing back to Austria.

You have probably heard of the German scheme of repopulating their country by "lateral marriages." I secured several copies of these certificates. The Austrians did not take any care of their wounded. I saw an Austrian hospital with 52 men in it but 46 of them were dead. None of them had received any attention in five days. The Italian troops are very particular in looking after their wounded. They do everything they can for their relief and comfort. The Italian field hospitals are the best. The morale of the Italian troops is now very high. Their discipline is strict, but the soldiers respond splendidly to everything

that is required of them. The average Italian soldier feels that he can whip any ten Austrians.

I saw the execution of one Italian soldier who had murdered and robbed a woman. When he was led out to execution he cried pitifully, because he was not permitted to face the firing squad, but was made to sit on a box with his back to the firing squad. This was very humiliating to him, as it was witnessed by all his old comrades.

After the armistice was signed, the Italian prisoners were pouring into Trieste by the thousands and they had nothing to eat and conditions were very bad. I loaded a large Red Cross auto truck with coffee, condensed milk, soup and beans, and drove it through the Austrian lines for a distance of fifty-five miles to reach Trieste, although the Italian general did not think it would be a wise thing to do, as the Austrian army still held this territory and he would not be

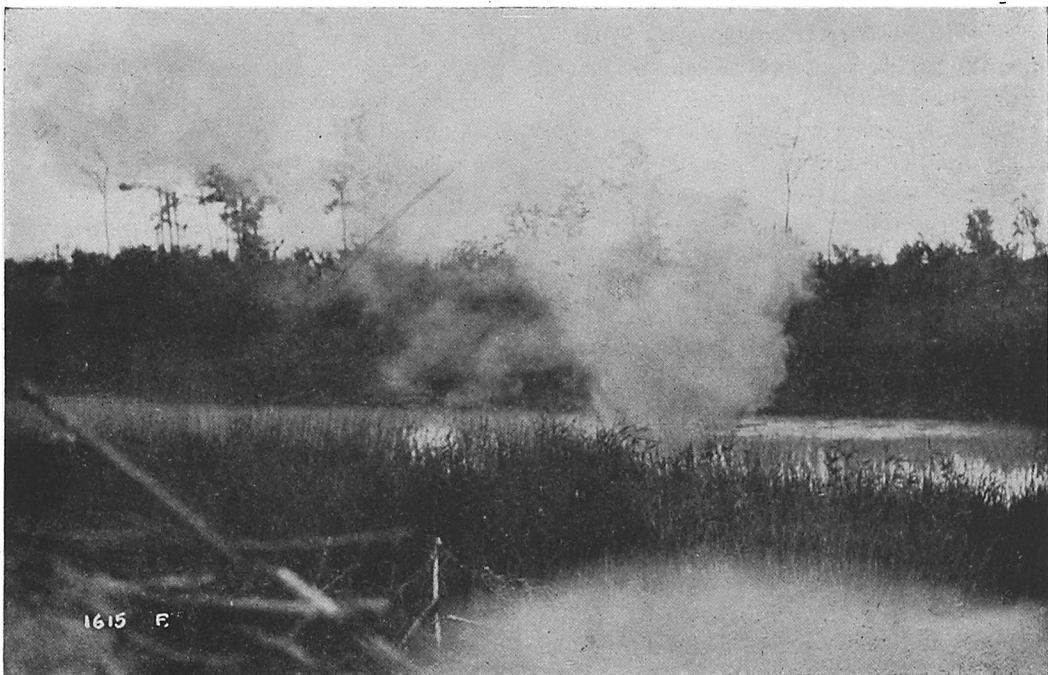


in a position to give any protection in case of trouble. However, I put two big American flags and two Red Cross flags on the truck and at four o'clock of the morning of November 7th I started out for Trieste via the Austrian lines. I got about half way through before I could make out whether or not the Austrian soldiers would prove friendly. I met on the road about 200 soldiers under the command of their Captain, and as I passed he saluted me. I promptly returned the salute; many of his soldiers waved to me. It was a happy idea to get this food into Trieste as the returning Italian soldiers were in a pitiful condition. Many of them did not have any shoes; some did not have trousers and were walking along the road with bare feet and with blankets wrapped around them. Some of them did not have hats. They were cold and hungry.

The Italian General in Trieste told me that it was a providential act—bringing this food. I decided to go to Venice to get

more Red Cross supplies and secured a military permit to go over on a torpedo boat. The military authorities at Venice furnished a ship to load all the supplies from the warehouse of the Red Cross and upon returning to Trieste, with the help of about one hundred assistants fed in a single day, 34,300 Italian soldiers who had just returned from prison camps in Austria.

While in Trieste I talked to many Austrian soldiers and civilians and I learned many interesting facts about what occurred in Austria during the war. They informed me that before the war started the Austrian women worked in the field for twelve cents a day and dinner. These same women during the war received \$1.50 a day and their dinner. The Austrian men do not work in the field, except the owners; they work entirely in factories or mines. Before the war 60 cents a day was considered a big price for this kind of labor, now \$4.00 a day was the average wage paid to these men. School teachers got no raise at



*Austrian shells exploding over Italian positions on the Piave River*



*Austrian dead floating in a canal in the lower Piave Country*

all. Before the war a principal of a school received anywhere from \$40.00 to \$50.00 a month. This pay was raised during the war from 20 to 30 per cent. The lady school teachers were paid \$200.00 a year. They did not receive any raise at all during the war, so that in 1918, two months' work was necessary for a woman school teacher to buy a pair of shoes; to work one month to buy a pair of stockings. Poor socks for men, made out of cotton, cost anywhere from \$6 to \$10 a pair. A pair of socks before the war would have cost an Austrian about 20 cents. During the war stockings for women cost \$10.00 to \$16.00 a pair. They were very poor grade. Before the war they cost 40 to 60 cents a pair. A spool of thread during the war cost \$6.00 to \$14.00 which before the war cost 4 to 6 cents. Before the war shoes cost \$4.00 to \$6.00 at the very outside, while during the war the same kind of shoes cost from \$100 to \$150 a pair. A simple little leather pock-

etbook that cost \$2.00 before the war jumped in price to \$25. One pound of sugar in illicit trade cost \$2.00 to \$3.00 a pound; before the war cost 8 cents a pound. Coffee and tea during the war cost \$25 a pound; before, from 60 cents to \$1.00 a pound. As long as rice was to be had it cost anywhere from \$2.26 to \$2.80 a pound; before the war, 6 cents a pound.

The following articles went up in price 500 to 1,500 per cent: Nails, bedding, glassware, clothing of all sorts, gloves. A suit of ordinary men's wear cost \$12.00 to \$24.00 before the war. During the war the same kind of suits cost \$120 to \$300. Overcoats cost the same as a suit of clothes. All rubber and gasoline was confiscated. Bicycles and fountain pens were not to be had. Eggs in the cities cost forty-two cents each. People paid almost anything that was asked. It finally came to this: Soon money lost its value. People would barter with each other, coffee for sugar, etc. Poor

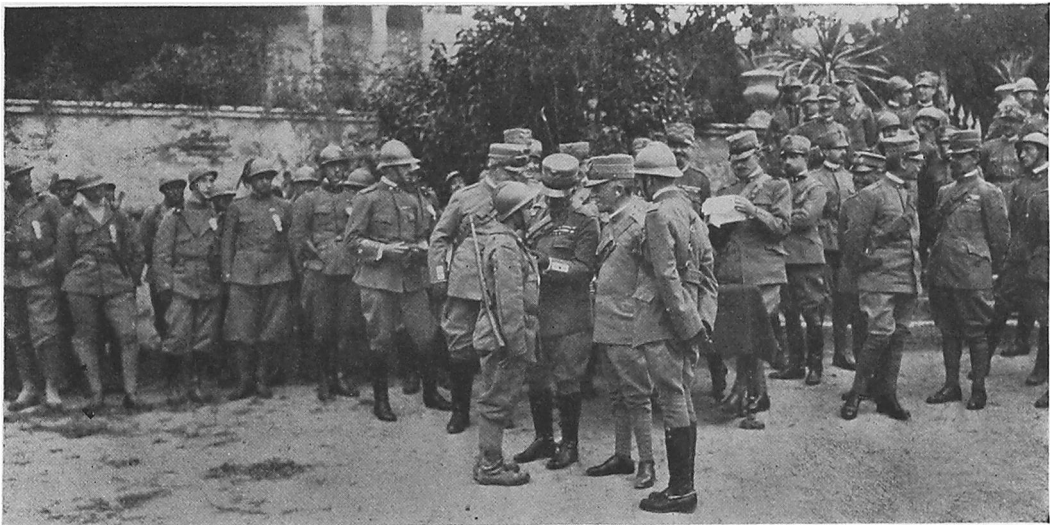


men in the cities would go to the country and offer their shirts for anything to eat to take home to their wives and children. One pound of horse meat in Vienna cost \$1.60. Before the war Austrians did not eat horse meat. A pound of lard during the war cost \$20.00 to \$25.00. Before the war lard cost 40 to 60 cents a pound. At the beginning of the war good horses sold for \$100.00. In 1918, the same farmers who sold their horses for \$100.00 had to pay \$1,600.00 to \$2,000.00 for substitutes.

Poultry was very scarce. An ordinary hen cost \$14.00 to \$16.00, while before the war the average hen cost 16 cents. People in the cities would take their furniture, brooms, kettles, bedding, clothing, anything useful, and offer same to the farmers for food, as the farmers would not accept any money in payment for food. Brooms went sky high in price on account of this bartering. For two years people in Vienna have used brooms made out of branches of birch trees. One pound of potatoes cost 50 cents. Before the war a bushel of potatoes could be bought for 50 cents. In the same way, a very small cotton handkerchief would cost \$2.00 which before the war would have

cost anywhere from 14 to 20 cents.

In the country the people lived on potatoes—potato pancakes chiefly. The people in the cities only had one meal a day—that was generally at noon. Nearly everybody had to go to bed without supper. The children suffered from lack of proper nutrition. Many died. Poor people had to stand all night in lines to be able to get a little bread made out of sawdust, straw, or cornmeal, mixed in chestnut flour. Soldiers received bread that was half paper. It was possible to pull pieces of paper and half rotten potatoes out of the bread. The officers and soldiers received the same rations. Each officer and soldier received 500 grams of bread a day but often they went hungry, not even receiving this so-called bread. They were also supposed to receive daily 200 grams of meat, 100 grams of vegetables, 2 grams of fat and 2 grams of imitation coffee a day. An Austrian officer told me that the imitation coffee was absolutely worthless. Except when an offensive was planned, the officers and soldiers in the Austrian army have been hungry for the past two years. The reason that they did not quit sooner was because they had been



*An Italian General decorating a brave Italian Soldier—The King of Italy is talking to the soldier*

accustomed to this manner of living and did not want to return to civil occupations. There were many food riots and strikes in all big centers. Men, women, and children were shot down in cold blood. Many riots occurred in Moravia, Vienna, Silesia and Budapest. These riots usually occurred in cold weather and lasted until the authorities could get food for the strikers.

It is hard to express in words the wonderful admiration, the faith, hope, and love that the Italians, the Czecho-Slavs and Jugo-Slavs have for our President. The Italians say that he is the greatest man in the world; the Czecho-Slavs say that he is the Apostle of the future; that he is their liberator and that they are going to erect a monument to his honor; while the Jugo-Slavs say he is the greatest man since Christ.

Here is something that the American people might give some thought and attention to. While in Trieste I talked to a great many Austrian soldiers and officers, and they all tell me that fully one-half of the Austrian army is planning to go to the United States as soon as peace is signed. They want to escape the burden of the heavy taxation in Austria. They are coming to the United States not because they like us, but simply to get out of the country what they can.

With regard to the tremendous Italian emigration that will start in as soon as peace is signed, would say, that the American people should give these brave people a welcome hand, but the Austrians should be ostracized, both commercially and socially, by every man and woman who claims to be a loyal American citizen. How can any 100 per cent American have dealings, either commercially or socially, with ex-Austrian soldiers and officers who brained the Italian wounded with spiked clubs, as they lay helpless on the battle-fields; who tried to communicate social diseases to Italian soldiers by outraging Italian women; who tried to

spread a great cholera plague in Italy, by dropping candy over Italian cities containing cholera baccili; who robbed old men, women and children of their clothes and bedding; who flogged these same old men, women and children if they did not give them food from the little supplies that they had hidden away; who fed the Italian prisoners with soup made out of grass and turnips and in consequence of this starvation diet one hundred thousand Italian prisoners died in Austria during the past year; who have no sense of shame or honor?

Before having any dealings with an Austrian, either socially or commercially, think over a few of these facts and then let your conscience be your guide.



*Lieut. Rogers distributing American Red Cross supplies to Italian soldiers on top of Konigspitz. Lieut. Rogers is the only American who climbed to the top of this mountain during the war, the ascent is made with ropes that are in the range of the enemy's rifles and machine guns*